

CLAIMS:

1. A method for signaling the direction of an escape route to be taken in an emergency in a building with emergency warning units that are arranged in a distributed manner and are connected to a central emergency warning system, comprising:

equipping the emergency warning units with luminous means; and

5 activating the luminous means sequentially in the manner of a running light by the central emergency warning system in an emergency, which running light designates the escape route leading away from a hazard site.

2. The method as claimed in claim 1, further comprising:

storing information in the central emergency warning system, including all escape routes of the building, the physical location of all emergency warning units, and a program for determining at least one escape route to be chosen depending on one or more incoming
5 emergency reports, which program calculates a beginning, a direction and an end of the at least one escape route leading away from the hazard site, and a sequence of the trigger commands for the luminous means of the emergency warning units to be activated.

3. A method as claimed in claim 1, wherein the central emergency warning system places the luminous means along the at least one escape route in a blinking mode.

4. A method as claimed in claim 3, wherein the central emergency warning system deactivates the luminous means along escape routes designated as unsuitable or hazardous escape routes.

5. A method as claimed in claim 2, wherein physical locations of illuminated escape route signs are stored in the central emergency warning system and are co-processed in the program for determining the at least one escape route.

6. An emergency warning unit for performing the method of claim 1, comprising:
a light emitting diode (LED) that continuously emits green light in an idle state and is switchable to a blinking mode during emergency conditions.

7. An emergency warning unit as claimed in claim 6, further comprising:

at least one additional, highly luminous, green LED that is switchable to a blinking mode by the central emergency warning system during emergency conditions.

8. An emergency warning unit as claimed in claim 7, wherein the at least one additional LED is physically configured as an arrow.

9. A manual, wall-mountable emergency warning unit for performing the method as claimed in claim 1, comprising:

two light emitting diodes (LEDs) arranged as arrows facing in opposite directions, wherein either of the two LEDs is configurable in a blinking mode by the central emergency
5 warning system based on an existing emergency condition.